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ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
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SUBJECT: THE NUBA MOUNTAINS: WHERE INSECURITY AND INTEGRATION ARE A WAY OF LIFE

REF: KHARTOUM 1309

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) Poloffs traveled to Kadugli, Southern Kordofan, the heart of the Nuba Mountains, on 13-16 September. Southern Kordofan state, which shares its own CPA protocol with Blue Nile State, faces a number of unique challenges, one being the integration of formerly-controlled SPLA areas into the NCP-run federal and state administration. Integration of the SPLA police with the federal police began in July in Southern Kordofan. While UNMIS claims integration is proceeding smoothly, SPLM leaders in the area questioned the NCP and the SPLM's commitment to the effort.

¶2. (SBU) Southern Kordofan bears the brunt of NCP complaints about lack of SPLA redeployment, with thousands of Nuba SPLA remaining north of the January 1, 1956 border in Southern Kordofan despite attempts to redeploy them south of the border to Lake Abiad. While the SAF 31st brigade did redeploy out of Abyei, there is still concern about a growing SAF presence northwest of Abyei that are within striking distance of the volatile region. Furthermore, all parties (UNMIS, NCP, and SPLM) claim that the lack of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) is a cause for concern in the state, particularly for SPLA forces that have not been integrated or redeployed. Finally, the well-known presence of other armed groups (OAGs - primarily PDF forces armed by the SAF but also some former SPLA forces) running amok in the area significantly adds to the state's insecurity and increasing fearfulness and ill ease among its residents.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER: POLICE INTEGRATION

¶3. (SBU) Situated on a large compound noticeably removed from the town of Kadugli, UNMIS Sector IV military personnel, totaling 1626, (Egyptian battalion, Indian Air Support, and Bangladeshi Police) claim the chief insecurity concerns in Southern Kordofan include: low capacity of the police, lack of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), increasing SAF troop levels at Kharasana (outside the interim borders of Abyei), and the movement of armed SPLA troops from Lake Abiad back and forth to the Nuba Mountains.

¶4. (SBU) UNMIS milobs claim that integration of SPLA police from the formerly SPLA-controlled areas such as Kauda and Julud, which began in July, is going smoothly and that there is "no reluctance" from the former SPLM areas to integrate (reftel). So far, 1500 SPLA police have been recruited and are being trained in Khartoum, Wad Medani, and Kadugli. An additional 1500 SPLA police have been rejected for integration by the federal police, largely on medical grounds. Milobs claim that while the police integration project is moving ahead, there is uncertainty about what to do with the 1500

SPLA police that are out of a job. According to the milobs, many are returning to their homes with their weapons. Milobs claim that GoS police have moved into former SPLA-controlled areas. Although there have been no major incidents between civilians and GoS police, milobs say that the lack of trust between civilians and the police hampers the effectiveness of the GoS police in SPLA areas.

15. (SBU) Recently-returned Deputy Governor of Southern Kordofan Daniel Kodi (SPLM), who just spent over two months outside of Sudan for medical reasons, tells a different story. Integration in the state is "not going well at all." It is not a matter of integration, but absorption," he said. Where do we put the 1500 former SPLA police who have been rejected by the federal police? Kodi lashed out at the possibility of deploying former SPLA police outside of the state of Southern Kordofan. "This is a violation of the CPA," he said. Those training in Kadugli are living in tents, have a small training place and few facilities. The GoS Police will delay the training process and frustrate the new recruits, he claimed. Furthermore, all SPLA police are being inducted as new recruits without regard to their former rank. This is unacceptable, said Kodi, and some may choose to return to the formerly SPLA-controlled areas.

16. (SBU) In a separate meeting, Southern Kordofan Minister of Finance Ahmed Saeed (SPLM) said that while police integration is a "significant step" for the state, he is concerned that some people are not taking integration seriously. Integration is the NCP's way of gaining access to the formerly-controlled SPLA areas, claimed Saeed. For integration to work, both the NCP and the SPLM need to be committed to it, he said.

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REDEPLOYMENT, YES - BUT WILL IT LAST?

17. (SBU) According to Egyptian military observers, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) maintain two regular infantry divisions in Southern Kordofan State - the 5th division in Kadugli and the 14th division in Dilling. The divisions are spread out across 189 locations in Southern Kordofan. Milobs expressed concern about the growing presence of SAF troops around the area of Kharasana, on the border of Southern Kordofan and Unity State. The SAF deployed its 85th brigade to the area after the April clashes between the Misseriya and the Dinka which left the town in ruins. The SAF has not permitted UNMIS access to the area to verify SAF's growing troop levels. UNMIS believes the build-up of SAF troops in Kharasana is a strategic move by NCP, given Kharasana's proximity to Abyei. Deputy Speaker of the Southern Kordofan Legislative Assembly Saddig Mansour (SPLM) lamented the fact that the SAF has not reduced its forces to a "peacetime level" in Southern Kordofan, as mandated by the CPA. The SAF is spread in strategic areas across Southern Kordofan, said Mansour, and continues to occupy schools and hospitals.

18. (SBU) In October of 2007, the SPLA claimed that it had 22,601 troops in the Nuba Mountains area. According to UNMIS milobs, the SPLA's 4th front began redeployment to Lake Abiad, on the border with Southern Kordofan and Unity State, south of the January 1, 1956 border, in December 2007. The SPLA did not allow UNMIS to verify its forces at Lake Abiad until July 2008. At that time, the SPLA claimed it had 6000 of its 22,601 troops at Lake Abiad, but UNMIS only counted 3878. An additional 3000 SPLA troops were absorbed by the Joint Integrated Unit (JIU) in Southern Kordofan. According to UNMIS, 15,723 SPLA troops are currently unaccounted for in the Nuba Mountains area.

19. (SBU) In a separate meeting with Southern Kordofan Minister of Finance Ahmed Saeed (SPLM), Saeed noted that the removal of the SPLA brigade to Lake Abiad has left SPLM areas feeling "very vulnerable" in the SPLA's absence. Furthermore, UNMIS confirmed there is significant movement of armed SPLA troops from Lake Abiad back and forth to the Nuba Mountains. UNMIS claims that the brigade's deployment south of the January 1, 1956 border is almost an impossible situation because the fighters consider themselves Nubans, not Southerners, and therefore feel that they belong in the Nuba Mountains area. Speaker of the Southern Kordofan State

Legislative Assembly, Ibrahim M-Balandia (NCP) said that Lake Abiad is not a "healthy environment" for the SPLA troops and "we (the NCP) expect them all to flee" and return to the Nuba Mountains.

PRESENCE OF OTHER ARMED GROUPS (OAGS)

¶10. (SBU) In addition to the NCP's Popular Defense Force (PDF), which UNMIS confirmed is armed and moving around the state in large numbers, there is concern about other armed groups (OAGs) that have the potential to disrupt the fragile peace in Southern Kordofan. Southern Kordofan Minister of Finance Ahmed Saeed (SPLM) described the existence of two SPLM splinter groups; one led by former SPLA General Telephon Kuku and the other by former PDF fighter Al Baloola (to be reported septel). According to Saeed, these groups are composed of disgruntled SPLA fighters angered by the lack of peace dividends that the CPA has brought to Southern Kordofan. The groups claim they will "raise arms" if the rights of the Nuba are not respected. When asked about the splinter groups, UNMIS milobs claim that they have not been able to verify the existence of such groups. Such statements are only rumors, milobs said.

¶11. (SBU) Furthermore, traditional leaders, civil society, and Southern Kordofan government figures expressed concern about the NCP's arming of Arab tribes in Southern Kordofan. Whereas Arab and African tribes and herders and agriculturalists used to coexist peacefully in the Nuba Mountains, the arming of Arab tribes and the squeeze for precious resources have led to fatal skirmishes, particularly between the Hawazma and the Nuba, in recent months. Many, including Deputy Governor Daniel Kodi, claim that the NCP arms Arab tribes in order to intentionally destabilize the state.

COMMENT

¶12. (SBU) Although it occurred three years late, the integration of SPLA police into the national police force has raised the hope of many that CPA implementation is taking place in Southern Kordofan. Not surprisingly, the SPLM in Southern Kordofan is extremely skeptical of the integration and fatalistic about its ability to succeed. Growing pains in the process are to be expected, particularly if the SPLA police are deployed outside of Southern

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Kordofan. Of greater concern, however, is the fate of the 1500 SPLA police who were rejected for integration that UNMIS believes are currently sitting at home armed and unemployed. The concern is compounded by the roughly 15,000 "missing" SPLA troops who never made it to Lake Abiad, have defected since arriving at Lake Abiad, or routinely move back and forth from Lake Abiad to the Nuba Mountains. Full defection of the SPLA force from Lake Abiad to the Nuba Mountains will spell disaster for the redeployment initiative and leaves the Nuba Mountains areasusceptible to violent SAF/SPLA clashes.

¶12. (SBU) The presence of OAGs in Southern Kordofan is a worrisome reality not only for the citizens of that area, but also for the fragile peace on the ground. The NCP's tactic of arming one tribe against another, as it has done in Darfur and southern Sudan, has fomented bad blood and hostility among groups in the Southern Kordofan area. Given the strong desire of most Nubans to see a revision in the CPA that would provide them an autonomous region, and the rejection by the NCP of such a prospect, there is a very real possibility of armed conflict in the Nuba Mountains before or after the 2011 referendum. The people in this region feel abandoned by the SPLM and manipulated by the NCP, and do not wish to be part of the North, having been subjugated by northern armies and militias for decades. Such conflict could be avoided if the NCP offered the Nuba communities security guarantees, provided better educational and health services, and integrated the 1500 remaining SPLA police into the GNU police. The CPA parties also need to negotiate a plan for integrating the thousands of SPLA forces into the northern army with rights to be based in their home areas, though this is likely to be unpalatable to the NCP. Such a discussion is long overdue if the CPA parties wish to avoid seeing an all-out conflict, similar to the May fighting in Abyei, break out in the Nuba Mountains during

the lead-up to elections and the referendum.

FERNANDEZ